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Leaves of Healing

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ZION

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CXX

“Standing Alone”

by Pastor Hugh Mainord

Scripture lesson: Matthew 26:31-35;
Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-34; John 13:36-38

Is I a soldier of the cross? A
newly-wor of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause
And blush to speak His name?

Must I be carried to the skies on
flow'ry beds of ease,
While others fought to win the
victory and sailed thru bloody seas?
Or will there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
When this vile world a friend to grace,
Will help me on to God?

For I must fight if I would
win—increase my courage, Lord!
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy Word.

—Isaac Watts

We are living in an unfriendly world
that hard the things of Christ. For us to
experience a victorious Christian life,
we are admonished by the Apostle
Paul:

“Don't let the world around you
squeeze you into its own mold.”

—Romans 12:2 (Phillips)

So around us are those who would
squeeze us into their mold so that it
would be difficult to tell a Christian
from a non-Christian. Victorious Chris-
tian living means that there will be dif-
ferences in the Christian's life. Confor-
mity means to be like everyone else in
the group, and that is exactly what the

devil wants. God's will is that the child
of God be different from those who do
not know Him—that the believer
manifest the holy character of God.

In a cassette tape that I have used at
Junior High Camp, Dr. James Dobson
tells of ten teenagers who were used in
a study on the influence of peer
pressure. The young people were told
that they would be tested to see if they
could distinguish which was the longest
of three lines, A, B, and C. However,
the study was really to determine the
effect of peer pressure. One person in
the group didn't know that all the
others had been told to vote for the se-
cond longest line.

When the first card was held up and
the leader pointed to the second longest
line, all nine hands went up. The boy
couldn't believe it, but thinking that
perhaps he had misunderstood the
directions, he put up his hand also.
Then the instructor said, “Be careful,
remember, it is the longest line you are
to vote for.” They went through all the
cards. Each time the nine boys voted
for the second longest line, and so did
the boy being studied. He knew he was
wrong but he wasn't willing to go
against the crowd. Seventy-five percent
of those studied did exactly the same
thing.

From this study, Dr. Dobson made
two other interesting observations: (1)
The greater the feeling of inferiority,

the greater the conformity; and (2) If
just one other person would vote for
the longest line, the one under study
would also vote for it. This shows the
value of having a friend who will also
stand for the right.

Dr. Dobson also told about five
young people driving around looking
for some excitement. The driver took
out a bottle of pills called “reds,” took
one, and passed the bottle to the next
fellow. He took one and passed it to
the three in the back seat. The two
others each took one and passed it to
the third fellow. He didn't want to take
one because he was against the taking
of drugs, but he knew that to refuse
would make him the butt of ridicule by
the others. What should he do? What
would *you* do?

It takes a lot of courage to go against
the crowd, yet most people do respect
those who are willing to take such a
stand. Furthermore, it encourages
another who is weaker to also take a
stand for the right. Let us look at some
Biblical examples of those who took a
stand for the right amidst great opposi-
tion.

Noah was such a person. He lived
during a time of great wickedness. Of
him it was said, “For you alone have I
seen righteous before me in this time.”
God then told Noah to build a very
large boat—in a place far from any
body of water. The reason for building
the boat was to save alive Noah's fami-
ly along with animals and birds, from a
great flood that God was sending on
the earth to destroy all the wicked peo-
ple and to start a new society through
Noah and his family.

It is easy to imagine the laughter and ridicule that Noah and his family endured during all the many years the boat was being built, but Noah stood firm on the promises of God, and God brought him through.

Another example is Joseph. Joseph stood against the wickedness of his brothers and lost—or so it seemed. He was sold into slavery in Egypt. There he experienced great loneliness, not only for his family, but because there were none with whom he could fellowship with in God. He alone knew the true God.

When severely tempted by Potiphar's wife to commit adultery, he refused, testifying to the holy nature of his God. How hard it must have been, but God gave him grace to stand alone. His decision may again have seemed like a wrong one, for it landed him in prison—but God was with him and blessed him even there.

In God's time Joseph was brought out of prison and made second ruler in all the land of Egypt—and as usual, Joseph gave all credit to God. When the drought hit Canaan and his brothers came down to Egypt to buy food, Joseph was able to forgive them for he recognized the hand of God in bringing him down to Egypt in order to save their lives. Joseph became a blessing to all Egypt and to his own family, but it could not have happened if he had not taken a stand for righteousness when tempted to go along with the crowd.

Consider also Caleb and Joshua as found in Numbers 13 and 14. Under the leadership of Moses, Israel had left Egypt and were on the southern border of Canaan. Before entering into combat, Moses chose a man from each tribe to go into the land to check it out. All twelve returned with glowing reports of the land, and two of them brought back a sample of the extraordinary productivity of the land. However, ten of the spies reported that though the land "flowed with milk and honey," they would in no way be able to conquer it. The cities were too well fortified and the armies too strong. There were "giants" in the land, and by comparison, they felt themselves to be as grasshoppers.

Caleb and Joshua agreed with the others concerning the goodness of the land and the strength of its armies and fortifications, but they saw something the others failed to see. They saw the mighty hand of God leading them out of Egypt and through the impossible

desert and as the One who would fight their battles for them.

It was two against ten, and the people listened to the ten. They rebelled against God, against Moses and Caleb and Joshua, threatened to stone them and head back to Egypt. God then appeared and ordered them back to the wilderness for forty years until all those who had rebelled had died off. Of all the crowd over twenty years of age, only Caleb and Joshua entered into the Promised Land.

Look also at that lonely prophet, Elijah. He challenged the wickedness of King Ahab, called upon God for a three and a half year drought upon the land, then challenged the 450 prophets of Baal to a contest on Mt. Carmel. There, he also challenged all the people to worship the God who would answer by sending fire from heaven to burn up the sacrifice which had been offered on an altar. The prophets of Baal had first chance, but no fire came. Then Elijah offered his sacrifice and had water poured over it until it was thoroughly soaked. Then, in answer to a simple prayer, God sent fire to burn up the sacrifice and to lick up the water standing in pools at its base.

Later, when Queen Jezebel challenged him, he became fearful. He felt so alone in his stand for righteousness, but God encouraged him and let him know that there were still 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

Then there is the prophet of which little is known—Micaiah. There were struggles between Syria and Israel, even as there is today. Ahab, king of northern Israel asked Jehoshaphat, king of Judah to assist him to recapture land taken by Syria. Jehoshaphat agreed, but first wanted to hear a word from the Lord. Ahab brought forth his 400 prophets who, with one voice, said, "Go...and win!"

Jehoshaphat was not satisfied and asked for a prophet of the Lord. Micaiah was called—with great reluctance—for Ahab did not like the fact that Micaiah, in being true to God, had to pronounce judgment against him on various occasions. Micaiah came and announced that Ahab would fall in battle and that the armies would be scattered. Micaiah dared to stand alone despite the persecution it brought—because He knew God.

Nor can we overlook Daniel and the three Hebrew children among those who stood alone for the right when all others were going the way of the crowd. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael,

and Azariah were among many other Hebrew young people taken captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. They were provided with food and wine and training with the intent that the best of them should take on political leadership. Daniel and his companions asked to be given only vegetables and water lest they defile themselves with food or wine not prescribed in the Law. Because of their faith and stand for the right, God put them in favor with the officials and eventually were chosen to become leaders in government.

At one time, the three Hebrew children found themselves defying the law of the king to worship the golden image he had set up as a unifying religion for all peoples. Though they were thrown into the fiery furnace, God was with them and brought them out and through this, both God and the Hebrews were honored.

Daniel also stayed true to God, defying the laws of the king and accepting the penalty of being thrown into the lion's den as a result. Again, God was with him which brought recognition to God as the Supreme Being, and Daniel held a place on honor until his retirement or death.

Peter is an example of both failure and success—and reasons for each. He sincerely loved his Lord, but through weakness and over-confidence, when standing against the crowd, he failed—denying that he even knew the Lord. Later, he was able to stand against all the authorities and boldly declare that they had been the murderers of that "Just One."

Now let us think of some modern day situations of "standing alone." Like many of you, there have been times in my life when I have had to stand alone. When I was fifteen I was really getting interested in the things of the Lord. Smoking became a big issue with me, so during my summer vacation I did research on its effects on the body. Working hard all summer, came up with a 10,000 word essay on it. My Christian Education Director arranged to have a portion of it published in one of our denominational magazines.

That fall, when I returned to school one of the teachers asked what I had been doing during the summer. I mentioned my research and paper on "Should I Smoke?" The next thing I knew it was on the front page of the school newspaper. From then on, I was "public enemy number one" amongst many of the student body. Some of the

teran band members promised to get me" when our band played for an out-of-town football game. I was very much alone and it was rough, but I learned a lot from that experience. I'll never forget that when everything seemed so bad, a fellow band member came up, and without a word, laid his hand on my shoulder, then took off. That little act gave me a lot of encouragement and helped me to see how I needed to encourage others.

There are many godly people who have a concern for unsaved loved ones and fellow workers but who have problems in knowing how to witness to them. Paul Little, in his book, *How to Give Away Your Faith*, gives some excellent suggestions. When trying to be a good witness to someone who invites you out for a beer, Mr. Little suggests you say, "No thanks, but I'll have a drink with you sometime." Or when invited to attend some entertainment that you would not want to attend, you might answer, "Thanks, but I'm not interested in that, but let me know when you are going to a concert (game, etc.) and I would love to go with you."

By suggesting an alternative you let the person know that you are not rejecting him but only the activity.

I read recently of a young woman from Romania who was attending a Christian school here in the United States. She had originally received permission to come to this country for three months, but having obtained a scholarship to a Christian school, she obtained a visa to stay. She stated that when she ever returns to Romania, she will have to renounce her Christian faith to obtain employment. In Romania there is severe government oppression of any who declare themselves to be Christians.

This young lady's mother lost her job as a teacher because of her Christian faith, and her father, who is a minister, must travel 120 miles to serve the church because the government refuses him permission to move closer. In a Communist-controlled country like Romania, it costs to take a stand for Christ, and often one may find oneself standing alone.

Another example comes from the area. Dr. Billy Kim, at Moody Summer's Week in February, 1984, told of Communists from North Korea coming down into South Korea about the year 1950, to a little village of some 120 Christians. They rounded up all the Christians and took them to the church. In this church was a picture of

Jesus. The people were lined up, then told they were to come and step and spit on the picture of Jesus. To refuse meant they would be killed.

The first in line was a deacon who had given considerable money to the church and had a good reputation in the community. He spit on the picture and stepped on it and walked over to the side of the Communists. The second, third, and fourth did the same thing. The fifth, a 17 year old girl, walked to the picture, picked it up, and with her skirt wiped off the spit, then held it close to her heart. She said, "Go ahead and shoot. I am ready to die." With that the Communists were taken back. They said, "We want all of you who are Christians to leave the building." Once outside, they heard four shots—one for each of the first four who had come forward. The Communists said, "If you would deny Christ, then you would also deny Communism when things get tough. That's why we shot them."

By taking a stand, the girl and the remaining Christians went free.

Each one of us is called upon to take a stand for Christ at one time or another. This also applies to the matter of personal salvation. Your parents, grandparents or friends cannot decide this for you. It must be *your* decision and yours alone. Have you made that decision yet?

There may be times that we will be called upon to stand completely alone, but normally, God gives us the encouragement of another. He also wants to use us in encouraging others.

A man who had been fired from his profession for some indiscretion, took a job as a hod carrier. He was suddenly plunged into a drastically different world. Instead of going to an office each day, he found himself carrying concrete blocks up to the fifth level of a construction site. Gone was the piped-in music and comfortable surroundings. Now he had to endure the blaring of transistor radios and the profanity from the men, especially the foreman. Near the end of the third week, he felt he could take no more. He decided to quit at lunchtime. Shortly before noon, the foreman came around with paychecks. As he handed the man his envelope, he made his first civil comment to him in three weeks. "Hey, there's a woman who works in the front office who knows you; says she takes care of your kids, sometimes." He named a woman who sometimes worked in the nursery of the church

where this man and his family worshipped. The foremen then went on his rounds.

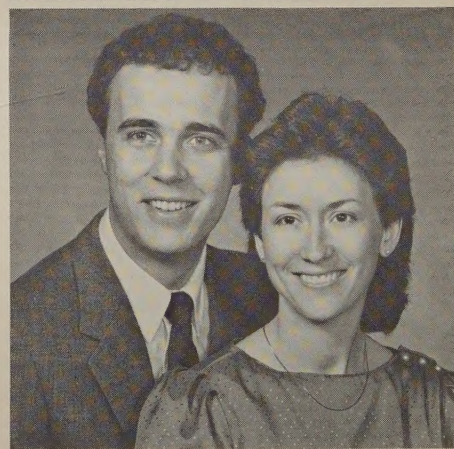
When the hod carrier opened his envelope, he found along with his check, a handwritten note from the payroll clerk. "When one part of the body of Christ suffers, we all suffer with it," it said. "Just wanted you to know that I'm praying for you."

He stared at the note, astonished at God's timing. He hadn't even known the woman worked for this company. Here, in his lowest hour, she had given him courage to go on. God had used a fellow believer to rescue his spirit just in time.

May God give us the courage to take a stand for the Lord as the words of this chorus suggests:

"I have decided to follow Jesus; no turning back, no turning back." □

Dale Stewart Appointed as New Director of Youth Ministries



Dale and Carol Stewart

From the time that Richard Anderson made known his intention to accept a position as fulltime camp director of a camp in the upper peninsula of Michigan, we have been seeking God's leading for a replacement. We believe that God has led and the announcement was made on Palm Sunday that Dale Stewart had been chosen to fill that responsibility.

Dale is the son of Arnold and Shirley Stewart of Zion, both of whom have been very active in our fellowship for most of their lives. Arnold Stewart has been especially involved in our youth activities for many years. Dale grew up

in this atmosphere and was always vitally interested in all our youth activities, first as participant, and later as assisting leadership. Following his sophomore year at Greenville College, he served in our summer youth ministries.

Dale graduated from Greenville College in 1980, and was listed that year in Who's Who in American Universities and Colleges, and in the following year in Outstanding Young Men of America. In December 1980, Dale married Carol Finger, who, with her family were equally as active in an evangelical church in Phoenix. Carol is also a graduate of Greenville College and has

been teaching in an elementary school near Greenville.

Upon graduation from college, Dale accepted a position at Greenville College as Admissions Counselor. This gave him responsibility in recruiting students and advising them on career goals, etc. This has kept him in touch with high schoolers and has served as a good preparation for his ministry with our youth here. He and Carol have also been involved as teachers in the Jr. High School department of their church. Dale also served on the music committee of their church, sang in the choir, and enjoys playing the piano, organ and guitar.

Dale and Carol have maintained a close tie with our church and have served as chaplain and/or cabin leaders at our church camp whenever possible.

Dale was chosen out of eight applicants, all from our own fellowship with each one having the potential of making a positive contribution to our youth ministry. Each application was carefully and prayerfully considered, but in the final decision, each member of the Administrative Council felt that Dale was God's choice at this time. We rejoice to announce his appointment and ask your prayers for Dale and Carol as they make preparations to move to Zion and commence their ministry.

MISSIONS

For Praise & Prayer

"So we ourselves ought to support such people . . . to be fellow workers with them in the truth." III John 8.

Manila, Philippines

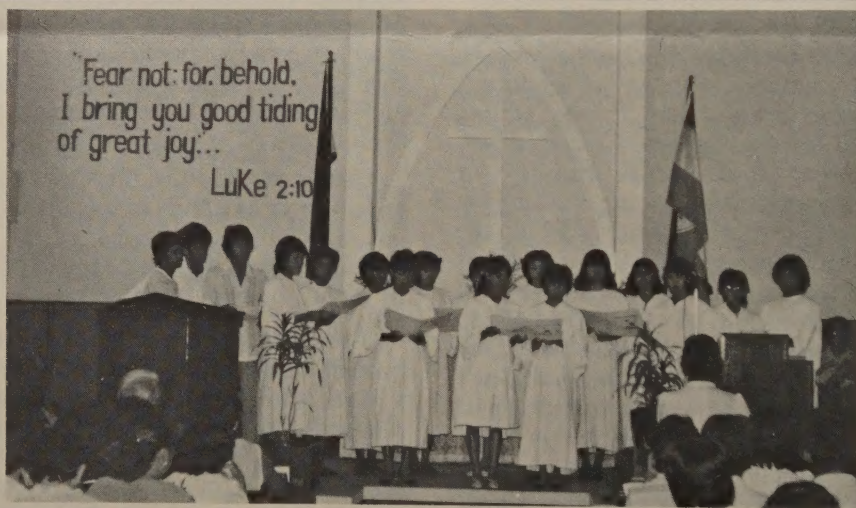
Through the sacrificial gifts of the members of the Caloocan Church and sister churches in the Philippines, along with the gifts of the fellowship in Zion and other areas, the Christian Catholic Church in Caloocan (in Metro Manila) has been able to complete their

building program. How we all praise God for this, and it is our prayer that the church may be a great witness for Christ in that community. The church

is pastored by Rev. Pat Hermosilla, Elder-in-Charge of the Christian Catholic Church in the Philippines.



Front of newly remodeled C.C.C.



Choir of the Caloocan Church, singing for their 1983 Christmas Service.

Blessed Holy Week Services

Holy Week Services began on Palm Sunday, April 15th with Dr. Wayne Hopkins of Moody Bible Institute as speaker. His theme for the messages Sunday through Wednesday was, "EXHIBITS OF THE CROSS." In each service, God used him to speak to each heart in a fresh way concerning the meaning of the cross to our personal lives. Also during the Worship Service on Palm Sunday, the combined choirs really lifted our hearts in the

singing of "The Palms"—which has become something of a tradition now.

On Thursday evening, a Baptismal Service was held, followed by "The Last Supper" scene from the Passion Play and a Candlelight Communion Service. It was a very moving and thrilling service. Those baptized were: Janene Buttera, Hayden Evans, Traci Gillings, Allen Good, Vicki Lynn Goudy, Dawn Michels, Kevin Michels, Colette Murphy, Clifford Swanson,

Edith Thompson and Jennifer Wolf. Also baptized at the same time were three young men of the U.S. Navy at Great Lakes, by Chaplain Bruce Blickle. They are Kevin Hill, David Stone and Terry Glenn.

During the noon hour on Good Friday, our church participated in a United Service at the First Baptist Church at which Pastor Minton was one of the speakers. That evening and on Saturday evening were performances of Zion Passion Play.

Zion Passion Play has had one of its best seasons this year in the effectiveness of its ministry in touching lives and glorifying for God. The audience response has been the best in many years—perhaps because of your prayers??

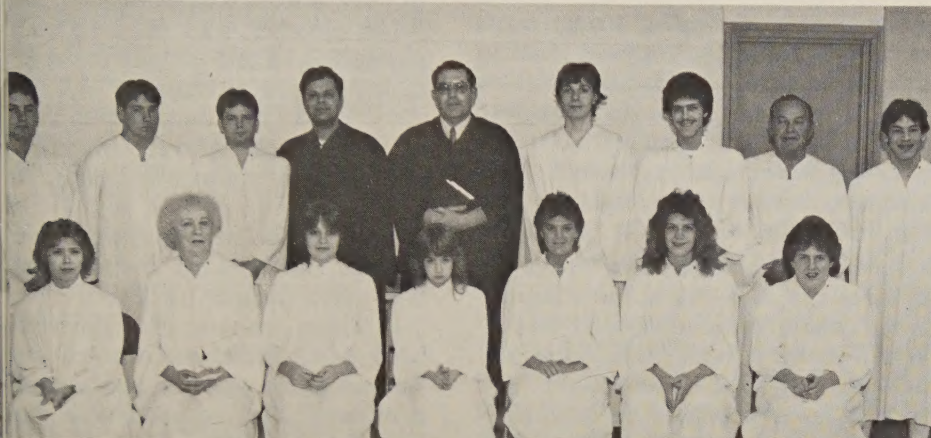
Easter Sunday was also special beginning with the Sunrise Service and message by Mr. Douglas LaBelle, our young adult leader, and the Worship Service with a message by Pastor Ottersen, and with the sanctuary choir

presenting the very moving cantata, "We Are Called," Sunday evening.

At the Worship Service on Easter Sunday, the following were received into fellowship: Lonnie Castillo (by proxy), Hayden Evans, Traci Gillings, Allen Good, Vicki Goudy, Charles Lord, Kathryn Lord, Patricia Lord, Dawn Michels, Kevin Michels, Colette Murphy, James Raper, Kimberly Raper, Maibeth Raper, and Clifford Swanson. □

Mother - Daughter Banquet

Over four hundred attended the Annual Mother - Daughter Banquet, which was held in the Mintern Memorial Hall on Thursday, May 10th. The tables were very beautifully decorated with fresh flowers and a very delicious meal was served by the men of the church. A highlight of the occasion was the presentation of the "Woman of the Year Award" by Pastor Ottersen. This year's award



Choir, from L. to R.: Jennifer Wolf, Edith Thompson, Janene Buttera, Traci Gillings, Vicki Goudy, Dawn Michels, and Colette Murphy.
Staff, from L. to R.: The three servicemen with Chaplain Bruce Blickle, Pastor Ottersen, Hayden Evans, Kevin Michels, Clifford Swanson, and Allen Good.



Pastor Ottersen presenting The Woman of the Year Plaque to Mrs. Paxton.

Retirement Party For Charlotte Mifflin

A retirement party was held for Charlotte Mifflin at Rooks Restaurant on April 24, to honor her for thirty-two years of faithful service to the church as cashier. Charlotte began her work under William Dunn, who passed away suddenly as a result of the church complex fire in April, 1959. She then worked under Paul Kessler who was followed by Leon Naffziger. When he died, no one else was found as bookkeeper, so Charlotte took on the entire responsibility herself.

The dinner party was attended by nearly the entire staff of the Church, to keep the time from becoming sad because of the sense of loss in Charlotte's retirement, fun gifts were given to her to make her retirement meaningful." Also, Pastors Ottersen, Paxton, and Mainord performed a service of the Mifflin trio, using one of the Mifflin trio tapes, "Mamie's Little Boy Loves Shortnin Bread." Eleanor Becker had prepared special wigs with ribbons and bows for the occasion. Well, it did help to enliven the occasion.

We have been very grateful for Charlotte's faithful ministry for all



L. to R.: Charlotte Mifflin, Pastor Ottersen, and Mrs. Mifflin.

these years and we are grateful to God for the health and strength given her to continue. Charlotte has often expressed her own gratitude for the opportunity of serving the Lord in this capacity.

Ione Koppen retired after thirty-five years of service at Zion State Bank to step into the place left vacant by Charlotte. God is so good in supplying this very critical need with such a committed and capable person. □

went to Mrs. Earl B. (Edna) Paxton, who has been a great example of loving, faithful service. She has been a teacher in our Zion Conservatory for over 60 years, and is still teaching. She also gave readings over radio station WCBF in the early years of radio broadcasting. She was also a part of Zion Passion Play from its inception in 1935 until about the year, 1969. She has taught Sunday school, and has served at the Literature Counter for many, many years. She is faithful in attending all the services of the church, and is a very caring person, remembering different ones with cards and gifts, and visiting shut-ins.

The standing ovation she received at the Mother - Daughter Banquet, when her name was announced, will be as nothing compared to hearing her Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter into the joy of the Lord." □

More persons have been made great by crosses than by crowns.

Pastor and Mrs. Ottersen Lead Group on Holy Land Trip

This past March, Pastor and Mrs. Ottersen had the joy of leading a group of thirty-three, mostly from the church, on a trip to Greece and Israel to visit sites with Biblical significance.

One of the highlights of their journey was visiting in the city of Bethlehem. There, they had the privilege of visiting not only the usual important sites, as the Church of the Nativity and the fields of Boaz and the Shepherd's Field, but also one of our own congregations. It was a special joy to share in the Bible School and Worship Service of the Christian Catholic Church in Bethlehem and to visit with the Nassar family. Elders Daher and George Nassar also spent much time sightseeing with them.



Elder and Mrs. (Katie) Daher Nassar leading an illustrated Gospel chorus during Sunday School on March 11, 1984.



Some of the assembled believers after the special service with the Holy Land Tour Group on Monday afternoon, March 12, 1984.

Bible Distribution in the United States in 1983

Last year, "The Year of the Bible," the American Bible Society distributed one million more Scriptures in the U.S. than it did in all of 1982. Distribution in the U.S. was in over 90 languages spoken by Americans and visitors to these shores.

*We are not put on this earth to see through one another, but to see one another through. □

Living Joyfully Debt Free

Everyone admits that they could live joyfully, debt free, if they had "just a little more money." What is hard to recognize is that we can also live joyfully, debt free, with even a little less. At least, most of us who have some kind of steady employment, can.

The easiest thing in America, as well as in other lands, is to get deeply in debt. This is especially true where credit buying is popular. Credit cards make over-spending too easy. Add to that the pressure from family members who "have to get this or that" because their friends have it, or because they were pressured from television commercials, and it is easy to add to the red ink side of the ledger.

Life isn't simple anymore. Take for instance one item—the home entertainment and communication media. When we were young (this dates me), we had one radio in the home. We bought no newspapers or magazines except on very rare occasions. From the simple radio, came AM and FM, and hi-fi systems with record player, then stereo, then stereo systems with pre-amp, amplifier, AM-FM tuner, stereo tape deck, record player and speaker systems, plus cabinet or shelves to put them in. Along with that came television, then color TV, then video recorders, video games and home computer systems.

Always there is more and MORE and the cost has gone from a few dollars to a few hundred dollars and now, to a few thousand dollars. And it is so easy to feel that you "have got to have these things." I am reminded of the story of a summer missionary among the mountain folk of southeastern Kentucky, who, being welcomed into the home of her host was told: "Honey, if you need anything, just come to me, and I will show you how you can do without it."

Getting out of debt isn't easy, but it can be done though it may take drastic measures. Here are a few suggestions:

1. *Stop buying* anything but what is absolutely essential.

2. *Avoid impulse buying.* Decide beforehand what you need and the approximate cost, then see where you can get these in the most economical way, and make only those purchases.

3. At the grocery store, purchase only that food which will be nutritious. Remember that packaged food (like

frozen TV dinners, etc.), snacks, sweets, pop, and desserts give value for your money. Also buy carefully what you spend for meals for eating out at restaurants.

4. Cancel all subscriptions: magazines, newspapers, record, and book clubs. Make more use of church and public library or borrow from others.

5. Look for ways to have fun and recreation *free*.

6. If you drive to work every day, to share rides and expenses with others. When possible, walk or use a bike. If purchasing another vehicle, ask for God's definite guidance.

7. Look for bargains in buying clothes. Don't overlook factory outlets, thrift shops, yard sales, etc.

8. Take a good look at the cost where you are living and what you are spending for utilities. You may need to look for a cheaper place to live.

9. Tithe, and give generously to the work of God and the need of others. Tithing alone will not get one out of debt, but when coupled with careful spending as outlined above, God's blessing will be upon the life, for God's promises are true. Commit ourselves and all that we possess to the Lord and treating all that God gives us as a trust to be used carefully. Prayerfully for His glory will result in blessing beyond our imagination—spiritual, physical, emotional and material blessing.

Remember, God expects of His people a modest lifestyle no matter how large the income may be. "*To whom much is given, of him shall much be required.*"

Earl Mims

In Memoriam

Elmer Atkins, March 8, 1984, in Georgia.

Esther Whitman, March 11, 1984, in Arizona.

Wilfred Brownlow, March 16, 1984, in Zion.

Mrs. Clayton (Hazel) (Kessler) Nogle, nee Jones, April 13, 1984, in Zion.

Ernest Hosken, April 27, 1984, in Zion.

Joseph Lester Crow, May 1, 1984, in Missouri.

Paul Brown, May 11, 1984, in Waukegan. □

How Much Love...?

by Rev. G. William Mason

ven at the Worship Service of the
ristian Catholic, January 22, 1984

PRAYER: "Lord, we don't often
that way, but your Word says that
re the most important thing to you
ie universe. Help us to hear that,
to feel it, and to act upon it
y—and throughout all our lives. In
s' Name, Amen"

ne Sanctity of Human Life, which
are recognizing today, is a high
iding phrase that means pretty
h whatever the speaker intends for
o mean. For me, the sanctity of
an life centers in how God sees
an life. For to me, God is far more
ortant than I am, or anybody else
his world is. Fortunately, He has
e known how He thinks and feels
it human life.

ortion is a terrible thing, but
tion is not the only issue that has
o with the sanctity of human life.
could also mention euthanasia,
cy killing, nuclear weapons,
de, etc. But there are also others
h are not so apparently connected
the sanctity of human life that we
to include as part of that
erstanding.

ur basic text is one familiar to us
John 3:16: "For God so loved the
d..." Sometimes we are so
liar with the words of a text that
ssume that we also understand ful-
meaning. To me, John 3:16 says
God loves every human being ever
ceived, and loves them so much
he gave His Son to die, to be raised
n, and to ascend into heaven in
r that we might have everlasting
But giving of His Son is not His
expression of love to us.

would like to think with you about
e questions, and suggest some very
and incomplete answers to those
tions.

How much love has God express-
to the human race?

How much of that love have we
pted and appropriated?

How much of that love can we ex-
tend to others?

**HOW MUCH LOVE HAS GOD EX-
TENDED TO THE HUMAN RACE?**

There is no way to answer that ques-
tion in full. One way we see it is in His
creation. As we buy, build or rent a
home for our families, so God spoke a
verse into existence for His

family—a universe so vast that even
our most modern and sophisticated
equipment cannot reach its limits. The
entire universe was created as a cradle
for the human race—for us. Then He
selected a planet and so formed it that
life for His human race would be
tremendously rich and abundant—with
resources still beyond our knowledge,
awaiting our discovery.

God then created Adam and Eve in
His own image, thereby giving the
human race the opportunity for growth
and development and the ability to use
those resources He had given. Then, to
Adam and Eve and later to the patri-
archs, He expressed His desire for an
intimate and personal kind of relation-
ship as He walked and talked to them
in the Garden, or as He walked to the
tent of Abraham to discuss with him
concerning the child Abraham and
Sarah were to have and of the situation
in Sodom and Gomorrah. By so doing,
He demonstrated the intimacy which
He wants to pursue with us, that we
might enjoy and be enriched by His
presence in our lives and by our com-
munion with Him.

Later, God sent His Son into the
world to manifest in human personal-
ity what He, Himself is like, as well as
providing in Him a perfect example of
what He would like us to be. God then
sent His Holy Spirit and gave to us the
Scriptures in order to conform us to
the Person of His Son.

That is just a fraction of what He
has done for us, for it is multiplied by
His personal relationship with every
believer throughout the world through
all history. Thus, it is impossible to say
how much God has expressed His love
toward the human race. It is fantastic,
but also immeasurable.

**HOW MUCH HAVE WE AP-
PROPRIATED THAT LOVE?**

Think of the universe. We have been
able to reach far out into space to other
planets and have even sent a piece of
machinery flying beyond our galaxy.
But how do we think and talk of these
accomplishments? Isn't it more com-
mon to hear about the glory of the
human race than to hear of the glory of
God who put it all there in the first
place—and gave us the intelligence to
reach out into it? We have received the
objects of God's love and somehow
have missed the flow of His love.

As a people, we have carelessly
destroyed various forms of animal and
vegetable life without really thinking
seriously as to why God put them there
in the first place. God made everything

in our world good and He gave the
human race the power to rule over the
other forms of life. However, in many
cases little thought is given to God's
will and purposes. Too often our only
thought is, "What is in it for me?"

I rejoiced a little when I heard over
the radio recently that a ranger had
some months ago sighted an Australian
tiger out in the wilds. I don't know
what an Australian tiger looks like as it
was thought to be extinct. Maybe I will
see a picture of one in the future. There
are also some forms of life which I
have seen which possibly my children
will not see. I only hope that I will fully
appreciate all the things God has made
and given us out of His love.

How much of God's love have we
appropriated? It is tragic that so few
have accepted the clearest and pro-
foundest form of God's love—the gift
of His Son, Jesus Christ, and eternal
life through Him. Even in our own
country, with all that claim some
allegiance to Him, 90 percent can be
counted on to stay home from church
on Sunday and ignore His Lordship.

How valuable are our lives and the
lives of the rest of our human compa-
nions on this globe? As Christians, we
may do a lot of talking about the issues
that surround the sanctity of human
life. We talk about abortion and the
multiplication of nuclear arms; about
child abuse and drug abuse; we may
talk about the garbage on televi-
sion—but that's about the end of it.
We just talk about it.

There is an issue that is current in the
State of Illinois that gets to the
problem of the sanctity of human life.
The sanctity of human life causes us to
want criminals off the streets.
However, at that point, our caring
seems to stop. We know that it costs a
lot of money to provide adequate hous-
ing and well trained staffs to supervise
prison inmates as well as to provide
constructive activities and education to
help rehabilitate them—and there are
many such inmates to be cared for. But
as taxpayers, we find the sanctity of
our pocket books falling considerably
short of the sanctity of human life. So
we allow prisons to be overcrowded
and poorly staffed and short of funds
for constructive activities.

**HOW MUCH OF THAT LOVE CAN
WE EXTEND TO OTHERS?**

That is a hard question. There are so
many needs. Child abuse has its op-
posite in child care and child
welfare—and that is expensive also. It
costs a lot to care for a youngster. To

provide adequate housing and training and counseling for a boy at Christian Haven cost about \$42 a day or \$14,000 a year and we don't succeed with every child we take in. We do our best to love and care for them and return them later back into the community, hopefully, as productive young people, able to cope with normal living in our imperfect society, but not all make it.

Children are not the only ones in our culture that are abused. There are more senior citizens than before and they have now become a large political block, at least causing politicians to respect them. Nursing homes have been created for the aged and many good nurses and other employees work in these homes, even as there are many excellent nurses in our hospitals, but all too often the care is still not what it ought to be. A recent study indicated that even in a hospital one stands a 16 percent of getting the wrong medicine.

We also neglect and abuse ourselves by not getting enough sleep or exercise, or over-indulging, or taking drugs. Not only do we suffer from physical abuse, but more frequently from emotional abuse. A simple illustration: At Christian Haven, I dealt with a young man whom we can call Jack. His record indicated that he had an I.Q. of about 50. (100 is considered average) I took Jack on a tour of the grounds and buildings and then sat down to talk about what we would try to do with him while he was with us should he decide to stay. After I had finished, I asked him, "Jack, can you tell me what we're going to do for and with you if you come here?" He answered, "No." So I shortened it up some and then asked, "Now can you tell me?" He said, "Yea, if I come here you're going to change my behavior and my attitudes." I hadn't used the word, "attitude." Now, tell me, "Did he have an I.Q. of only 50?" "No way!" His real I.Q. was more like 70.

Later, I learned from Jack that his mother had a habit of calling him "dumb" and "stupid" when he was young. Jack figured that if his mother thought he was stupid then he had better play the part, and he did—at home, at school, and in public.

It's very easy to abuse ourselves and other people emotionally and intellectually. We tolerate an awful lot of garbage intellectually. Television and the movies aren't the only place where garbage exists. Books are full of it too. Even a lot of good books have material in them that needn't be there as far as

contributing to the main ideas of the book, but are included to appeal to the lower tastes of people.

We may abuse others emotionally by being too critical. Criticism needs to be balanced with praise. Even the worst behavior may have some good elements in it. I can select the good elements to bad behavior in a child and show appreciation for that, he is more likely to change his behavior if he knows his good behavior will be appreciated. Criticism also relates to the sanctity of human life. We get too much criticism and we give too much. Somehow we fail to see enough of the good in others and in their behavior. Because of God's love, that is a part we should see more. Love looks for the good.

I have tried to help you understand how much God loves us and the many ways He has expressed that love. We are important to Him—more important than anything else in the universe. Therefore, in the light of that love, answer this question: "How much is your life worth?" You, and everyone else ever conceived is worth that much to God. We are made in His image and He loves us. That is what the sanctity of human life is all about. Therefore, as God values us, we are to value one another. As He has expressed His love to us, so we are to express it to others. Can we value others as God values us? I wouldn't ask the question if I didn't believe it were possible—not in our strength, but in His. "Yes!" "We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us." □

What is Love?

*Love is an attitude,
Love is a prayer
For a soul in sorrow,
A heart in despair.
Love is good wishes
For the gain of another.
Love suffers long
With the fault of a brother.
Love giveth water to
A cup that's run dry.
Love reaches low
As it can reach high,
Seeks not her own
At expense of another.
Love reaches God
When it reaches our brother.*

—Calvary Baptist Church
Kannapolis, NC

A Christian who rests, rusts.

32,850 Sermons Later

Several years ago, a reader of *The British Weekly* wrote this provocative letter to the editor:

"Dear Sir:

It seems ministers feel their sermons are very important and spend a great deal of time preparing them. I have been attending a church service quite regularly for the past 30 years and have probably heard 3,000 of them. To my consternation, I discovered that I cannot remember a single sermon. I wonder if a minister's time might be more profitably spent on something else?

Sincerely,...

For weeks a real storm of editorial responses ensued. The uproar finally was ended by this letter.

"Dear Sir:

I have been married for 30 years. During that time I have eaten 82,850 meals—mostly of my wife's cooking. Suddenly, I have discovered that I cannot remember the menu of a single meal. And yet, I received nourishment from every single one of them. I have the distinct impression that without them, I would have starved to death long ago.

Sincerely,...

Robbin MacDonald
Jacksonville, Florida

From "Pulpit Helps" February, 1981
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National Day of Prayer

President Ronald Reagan proclaimed Thursday, May 3rd, as a National Day of Prayer for our nation. We observed that Day by encouraging our people to spend time in prayer for our nation. We also sponsored Prayer Breakfast at our church which was well attended and the prayers offered were spontaneous and earnest. During the noon hour, many of our members met with others in their offices at work for prayer. Many of the ministers of the community met during the noon hour for a time of earnest prayer, and in the evening, a United Concert of Prayer was held in Lakeview Church in Zion, under the leadership of Rev. Douglas Detert of the Faith Homes in Zion, and Pastor Earl Minton. It was a very precious time of prayer and the beginning of what we hope will be regular occasions—either on a monthly, quarterly or twice yearly basis.